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ABSTRACT

Principals wish to foster both staff motivation and student achievement in their schools, yet research reveals a seeming contradiction between these two goals. Fredrick Herzberg found in the late 1950's and 1960's that in various occupations, employees' motivation depended primarily on their sense of: the significance of their work, achievement, recognition for accomplishment, and responsibility; and on advancement opportunities. A later study corroborated these findings for teachers. Moreover, a recent study found that the "best-run" American corporations maintained excellent reputations, outstanding financial performance, and innovativeness not by hiring extraordinary people but by motivating average employees to extraordinary dedication and performance. These studies suggest that principals should motivate teachers by giving them more autonomy and responsibility. Yet school effectiveness research suggests that principals should exercise strong authority to make their schools effective. Principals thus face a seemingly irreconcilable dilemma. The solution may lie in the concept of "simultaneous loose-tight properties," which entails rigid adherence to a few broad guiding values but allows considerable autonomy in day-to-day operations. Each school should establish a unique set of guiding values through a process involving all teachers and perhaps students and parents. (MCG)

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MUST PRINCIPALS CHOOSE BETWEEN TEACHER MORALE AND AN EFFECTIVE SCHOOL?

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MUST PRINCIPALS CHOOSE BETWEEN TEACHER MORALE
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If principals from around the country could somehow be granted two professional wishes, their collective list would probably include 1) working with an enthusiastic, highly motivated staff and 2) meeting the standards of an "effective school" in terms of student achievement. Certainly every principal wants a turned-on, motivated staff, just as every principal wants a school that is effective in helping all students achieve the school's educational goals. However, a principal who turns first to the research on motivation and then to the research on effective schools for assistance in achieving these objectives, is quite likely to become confused when confronted with the apparently contradictory findings of these two bodies of research.

RESEARCH ON MOTIVATION

Perhaps the most notable research on motivation of employees was conducted by Fredrick Herzberg in the late 1950's and 1960's. The conventional thinking in industry had held that salary was the most effective motivator of employees. Herzberg challenged that thinking. He acknowledged that salary- along with other extrinsic factors such as working conditions, company policy, job security, etc.- could lead to worker dissatisfaction and ultimately to substandard performance if left unaddressed. However, he contended that these extrinsic conditions or "hygiene factors" were ineffective in terms of motivating employees to extraordinary effort or commitment. Herzberg discovered that if individuals were to be inspired to exceptional effort, they needed

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to feel a sense of 1) the significance of the work they were doing, 2) achievement, 3) recognition for accomplishment, 4) increased responsibility, and 5) advancement.

In seventeen different empirical studies of such diverse work groups as engineers, accountants, agricultural workers, technicians, supervisors, assembly-line workers and housekeepers Herzberg replicated his finding that it was the presence of these intrinsic factors or "motivators" that inspired employees to effort and energy that went "above and beyond the call of duty." Thomas Sergiovani replicated Herzberg's study with teachers and found that although advancement was not a factor in their job satisfaction, the other motivators- achievement, recognition, responsibility and the work itself- were the most significant factors in terms of the job satisfaction of teachers.

In a more current study, Thomas Peters and Robert Waterman attempted to identify the conditions that contributed to the success of American companies with excellent reputations, outstanding financial performance over a twenty-year period, and a proven record of innovation. Peters and Waterman found that these "best-run companies" were outstanding not because they were able to recruit and hire extraordinary people, but because they were able to motivate average employees to extraordinary dedication and performance. These companies were effective motivators because they appealed to "man's innate dualism." On the one hand they appealed to their workers' desire "to belong," to be a part of an important common cause. On the other hand, the companies designed their reward systems so that their

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employees could "stick out" and feel like "a star," "a winner." Targets and quotas were set (often by the employees themselves) to ensure that the great majority of employees would meet the target. The companies then celebrated the success of these employees with ceremony and "hoopla."

The parallels between Herzberg and Peters and Waterman are apparent. Both studies emphasized the importance of workers feeling a sense of the significance of the work they do, and a sense that their efforts and ability are recognized and appreciated. But how does an organization instill these feelings in its employees? Once again, Herzberg and Peters and Waterman agreed. According to Herzberg, the key to motivation was "job enrichment" or increasing the autonomy and responsibility of the employee. Of course, this enrichment could occur only when those in management were willing to release or share some of their decision-making authority. Peters and Waterman echoed Herzberg's conclusion. They found that workers who were given the freedom to determine some of their own goals and the autonomy to develop strategies to achieve them, outperformed their more rigidly supervised counterparts again and again.

The implication for a principal seeking to motivate his staff seems clear- simply give teachers more freedom in what they teach and how they teach it then watch their morale improve. However, before closing oneself in the office, secure in the knowledge that a laissez-faire approach to instruction is certain to improve morale, a principal would be well-served to

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review the research on effective schools.

RESEARCH ON EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS

One of the most consistent findings of the effective schools research is that effective schools have strong principals who take an active interest in instruction. In one of the earliest and most widely cited studies, George Weber (1971) listed "strong instructional leadership from the principal" as the first of eight school-wide characteristics that influenced student achievement. Studies by the New York State Department of Education (1974), Armor et al. for the Rand Corporation (1976), Trisman (1977), the Maryland State Department of Education (1978), Brookover and Lezotte (1979), and the California State Department of Education (1980) are just a sampling of the research that has concurred with the notion of the critical importance of the principal acting as a strong instructional leader in an effective school. As the Phi Delta Kappa study of effective urban schools (1980) concluded, "the key to a school's success is the 'principal principle': the notion that a strong administrator with vision and with ability to carry out his or her goals can make an enormous difference in a school." Ron Edmonds stated in his typically unequivocal terms that the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools included "strong administrative leadership without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together or kept together." Even Stewart Purkey and Marshall Smith, who described their orientation to the effective schools research as "skeptical" and admitted that they were "suspicious of

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the 'Great Principal' theory," acknowledged that "it seems clear that leadership is necessary to initiate and maintain the improvement process...(and) the principal is uniquely positioned to fill this role."

In short, one can not read the effective schools literature without visualizing strong, dynamic, aggressive principals who roam their schools with a clear vision of what they want to achieve and determination to achieve it regardless of the obstacles. It is a picture that is difficult to reconcile with the message of increased autonomy for teachers that comes from the research on motivation. How can a principal interested in both staff morale and student achievement resolve this apparent conflict?

SIMULTANEOUS LOOSE-TIGHT PROPERTIES

The solution to this dilemma may be found in the concept of "simultaneous loose-tight properties" described by Peters and Waterman in In Search of Excellence. It is a concept which they found in evidence in each of the outstanding corporations that they studied. Simply put, organizations that apply this concept identify a few key, central values that give direction to the activities and decisions of all members of the organization. The organization demands rigid adherence (i.e. tightness) to these few, non-negotiable values from all of its members. At the same time, however, it promotes and encourages individual innovation and autonomy (i.e. looseness) in day-to-day operations.

This concept can be applied to schools. For example, a principal

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and his staff might agree upon the following central values for their school:

1) We will teach to the course objectives and provide evidence of student achievement of those objectives.
2) We will make full use of the instructional time alloted to us.
3) We will demonstrate our belief and expectation that each student is able to achieve the basic objectives of the course.
4) We will help to ensure an orderly atmosphere that is conducive to learning throughout the building.
5) We will treat all members of the school community with respect.

This brief list addresses the major concerns of a principal concerned with student achievement and gives direction to the daily actions and decisions of teachers. However, it also provides for a large measure of autonomy for the individual teacher. Although instruction must be directed to particular student outcomes (outcomes which the teacher should play a major role in developing), the teacher is left free to determine how he or she will see to it that students achieve those outcomes.

The list provided here is meant to serve as an example, not as a model. Each school should establish its own unique values and should involve the entire faculty (and perhaps students and parents) in the process to establish those values. Once they are established, a principal can assume a leadership role by modeling and vigorously safeguarding those values while simul-

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taneously providing his or her staff with the autonomy necessary for high morale. A highly motivated staff and an effective school are not mutually exclusive.

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